

9 June 1963

MEMORANDUM FOR: Assistant Director of Current
Intelligence

SUBJECT : Rostow Briefing

1. In response to Mr. Rostow's request to Mr. Cline, I met with Messrs. Rostow, Mose Harvey, William Jordan, and John Ford at the State Department on Saturday, 8 June. The meeting began at 0900 and ended at 1200. It was a free and informal question-and-answer session, chiefly led by Mr. Rostow.

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2. The meeting began with Mr. Rostow reviewing the areas of uncertainty as they occurred to him while reading the [REDACTED] that crossed his desk. (He had a large pile of such reports on his desk; this may have been the "month's accumulation" he had requested.) Not only did he want to know specifically about Soviet personnel, the reports of Soviet submarines in Cuba, underground storage and the use of caves, recent Soviet shipping to Cuba, and the use of Cuba by the Soviets as a COMINT and early-warning base, but he also wanted our evaluation of the character of recent Soviet activity being reported by refugees, its pace, how it compared with last year, and the quality of the reporting. In short, he said he wanted to know how he should think about Cuba today.

3. I reviewed the background to the present situation, the timing on the removal of the strategic missiles and IL-28s and the first troop departures, the timing and magnitude of the troop departures beginning in mid-February, and what effect these had had on the Soviet military presence. I described the process by which we saw more and more evidence of Cubans being trained in the use of Soviet arms and how refugee and agent reporting had assisted in this. I also described the methodology by which we attacked the intelligence problem of Soviet military forces in Cuba, stressing the use of all sources available. [REDACTED]

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4. On the question of the recent agent and refugee reports -- their accuracy, reliability, and utility -- I led off by pointing that our first good fix on the training of Cubans in MIG-21s came from [REDACTED] that the details contained in this report have generally been confirmed [REDACTED] Much information received from refugees is obviously subject to the biases of exaggeration, self-interest, and ignorance, but we examine each report critically to make as much use of it as we can. We often request re-interrogation to clarify or expand on information provided in a report. I suggested two reasons why the recent reports may allude to an "increasing" Soviet presence at a time when the number of Soviets has decreased by more than 5,000 in the last 5 months: increased combined Soviet-Cuban training activity with consequent greater exposure of Soviets to Cubans generally; and increased amount of Soviet equipment being driven by Cubans, which may appear to citizens who don't get near enough to tell who is operating as though Soviet troops are in charge.

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5. In addition to discussing each of the Soviet weapons systems and the armored camps at length, I

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6. On the subject of shipping, I was able to draw with good effect on the attached report, which you may not have seen, prepared by [REDACTED] Mr. Rostow was very interested in the technique of shipping intelligence and said he felt reassured knowing how we went about our business.

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7. In closing the meeting, Mr. Rostow asked if we would not consider attempting to prepare an informal projection as to what the Soviet military presence in Cuba may look like a year from now. He suggested that we make our best guess about the present state of training of Cubans for each weapons system, estimate when

the training schedules will end, and examine the implications for the number of Soviets that may then leave and the number that would remain, more or less indefinitely, to assist in further training and particularly in maintenance and upkeep of the Soviet equipment. I told Mr. Rostow that we would examine the matter he raised and would advise him of any useful conclusions we reached.



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Chief, Military Division

Attachment

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